

**REPORT TO ALDEBURGH TOWN COUNCIL FROM
COUNTY COUNCILLOR RICHARD SMITH, MVO 14 NOVEMBER, 2016**

Thank you for your invitation to attend the Town's Remembrance Sunday commemorations and for the opportunity to honour the war dead by laying a wreath. I much value the annual opportunity to remember those who died fighting for the freedom we now enjoy, and I am glad this year again there was a large turn-out of the town's people.

I am pleased the re-opening of Aldeburgh Library was marked in style; I'm sorry that I couldn't make the occasion, but glad to see press coverage of the event. The Friends' Group and the Library itself go from strength to strength, and this is good for the town and also for the increasing number of young people who now use the Library, be it at events in co-ordination with the Primary School or because they simply enjoy going there!

Most of my time recently has been taken up with preparing the County's Budget for 2017-18. The first draft will be published on November 21st, in advance of an all-day Scrutiny Committee on 30th. So I am a little constrained about telling you too much about its content. But what I can reveal is that we will not be increasing basic Council Tax for one further year, with the result that our residents will be paying the same amount as they were asked to pay in 2010. We are proud of this fact, but it is unlikely to continue in future years as the government-imposed grant reductions and the need for budget savings through deploying fewer staff to provide a continually 'good' level of service becomes ever more difficult.

At the moment I am touring around Suffolk, giving a budget preview and consultation in eleven Suffolk venues. There is also an online survey on the SCC website. The relevant meeting for Aldeburgh is at Suffolk Coastal District Council's offices in Melton Hill, Woodbridge at 6.30pm on 28th November. Unfortunately I won't be there as there

are two meetings that evening, and I will be speaking at the other event in Hadleigh. But do go along and hear the details from the County's Head of Finance, Geoff Dobson, who is a highly-experienced Officer and a really good man to boot! I will report more fully on the actual proposals, and their consequences, in next month's report.

Also, I recommend that Aldeburgh Town Council is represented at the meeting in Leiston at 6.30pm on 29th November at the Community Centre, King George's Avenue, when a public meeting is being held by the Police and Crime Commissioner and the Chief Constable.

Last Friday I had my quarterly semi-official meeting with your Town Clerk, who drew my attention to the continuing lack of a PCSO in Aldeburgh, and the associated problems – especially parking enforcement. I did go to see Mr Passmore, and chased up a decision from him by e-mail and in person last month. But I am still waiting to hear his decision about match-funded PCSOs, and I will ask him again about this subject at the public meeting.

I know that generally the town is in good heart and, as we are now in the run-up to Christmas, I hope spirits will remain high, behaviour will remain good, people will not drink too much but just enjoy to the full the parties and get-togethers held throughout the town with due respect for neighbours and others in the community.

Richard Smith, MVO

Richard.smith@suffolk.gov.uk

01728 602714